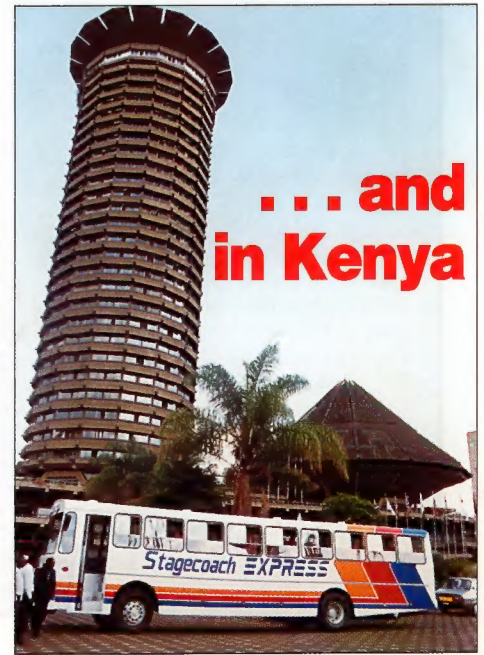


On Stage

THE OFFICIAL NEWS MAGAZINE OF STAGECOACH HOLDINGS PLC

ISSUE NO 18 SEPTEMBER 1995

**In this issue -
Extract from
Annual Report
& Accounts**



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

AS much of this issue of *On Stage* is taken up with the Group's Annual Report & Accounts for 1994/95, I will say no more here other than to repeat my thanks to all our staff who have made the Group's success possible.

I would also particularly like to thank everyone for the efforts they have made to ensure that our Imperial Cancer Research Fund campaign was a great success. A substantial cheque will be handed to ICRF at our Annual General Meeting on 8 September, helping to continue ICRF's vital work.

B. Souter

BRIAN SOUTER
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN



On Stage

On Stage is edited by Janet Campbell of Stagecoach South on behalf of the Stagecoach Group. The magazine is published four times a year in March, June, September and December.

Advertising connected directly or indirectly with Stagecoach is accepted. Charitable adverts will be included without charge, otherwise rates on request.

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On Stage is distributed free to Stagecoach staff. Public subscriptions are available at £10 per four issues from the editorial address. The Editor is unable to enter into individual correspondence concerning the affairs of the Stagecoach Group.

On Stage is designed by Nick Evans Communications, Whitstable, Kent 01227 275157 and printed by Camtec, Birchington, Kent 01843 845846.

Latest Group appointments

AMONG the latest appointments in the Stagecoach Group are those of Sheila M'Mbijjewe who has become Finance Director of Stagecoach in Kenya and Agnes Mwangi who has been appointed Operations Director of the same company.

Sheila was formerly Group Financial Controller and Agnes previously Group Passenger Executive.

At East Kent, Heath Williams has become general manager of its southern division. He began his career in the bus industry 11 years ago and joined Stagecoach in 1992. Most recently he has been general manager of Hants & Surrey.

Steve Barnett, general manager of Coastline, has taken over the reins at Hants & Surrey. His management of Aldershot and Hindhead depots are in addition to his responsibilities at Coastline.

Emrys Phelps, formerly depot controller at United Counties in Northampton, has become depot manager of Midland Red's Stratford base. Responsible for day to day running of 38 vehicles and 50 people he once worked for Nottingham City Transport, Trent Buses and Yorks of Northampton.

Midland Red also welcomes Jim Box as its district engineer for Rugby. Previously with Federal Express Jim is responsible for 80 vehicles at Rugby and Coventry Metro depots.

Bidding farewell to Midland Red

at the beginning of August was Joe Roper who left as Rugby depot manager to take up his new position of area manager of Clyde Islands which covers the Scottish towns of Arran and Bute as well as the Cowal peninsula.

Moving south of the border in July was Ian Laing who has been appointed depot operations manager of Blue Bus Services, part of Busways, at its depot in the Byker area of Newcastle.

Formerly assistant depot manager in Glenrothes for Fife Scottish he joined originally as a driver later to become depot controller and assistant depot manager. His new role sees him responsible for running 69 vehicles and 140 people.

Fife's St Andrews depot has a new manager in John Macpherson. He was previously depot engineer for both St Andrews and Aberhill bases.

Ron Smith has been promoted from inspector to assistant operations manager at Grimsby Cleethorpes. Joining the transport business in 1971 as a conductor, he later switched to one man operation before becoming inspector in 1983.

In Malawi, Dan Duwa has returned to Mzuzu to become its operations engineer. He was formerly based at Blantyre and has also previously served in various operations roles at Makata Road and Mzuzu during his 21 year long career.

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Front cover photographs show top: Busways vehicle clad in Stagecoach livery, left, one of Ribble's Stagecoach Express coaches at Blackpool Pleasure Beach and, right, a Kenyan Stagecoach Express vehicle in front of the Kenyatta International conference centre, Nairobi.
Back page shows one of 52 new vehicles bought for Selkent's 53 service.

Still counting the cash after Cancer Research Campaign success

'Penny a Passenger' day beats all expectations

STAGECOACH'S Cancer Research Campaign has been a great success thanks to the efforts of many Stagecoach staff across the country.

A giant cheque will be handed to the Imperial Cancer Research Fund at the Group's Annual General Meeting in Perth on 8 September.

Group Director, Ann Gloag said: "I am confident we will reach our initial target of a substantial contribution to Cancer Research.

"We shall not know the exact amount collected until just before the AGM, but I can already announce that the first part of the campaign, the 'Penny a Passenger' on 30 June, raised over

£19,000 compared with the £10,000 expected.

"Whatever the final sum raised, I am delighted that we at Stagecoach will be able to contribute to ICRF's continuing work. The efforts made by everyone at Stagecoach demonstrate just how seriously we all regard their efforts to combat cancer."

The giant cheque will be handed to ICRF by the winners of a draw held containing all collectors' names.

The winning couple have also won a prize of a free weekend at a Forté Heritage Hotel of their choice.

'Marry me' was special message on Bill's bus

BILL Hodgkinson from Ribble's depot in Bolton decorated his bus with ribbons and balloons recently.

It was all for a special reason, because written on the front windscreen of his Clitheroe bound vehicle was the message: "For your eyes only - I love you Mary - will you marry me?"

We're happy to report that the lady in question, Mary Morton, answered yes to the big question. After a brief engagement the couple were due to be wed in late July.

Calendar competition

THE final choice of photographs for the 1996 Stagecoach calendar had not been made as *On Stage* went to press but we hope to bring you the full results in the December issue.

Driver Andy Pickles, from Morecambe, washed colleagues cars to raise £130 for the campaign. He was among hundreds of people around the country who gave up their own time to help.



Group builds up steam for first rail franchises

STAGECOACH has entered initial 'indications of interest' in the first three rail franchises to be offered for Great Western Train Company Ltd, LTS Rail and South West Trains. A shortlist of bidders for each franchise is expected to be announced during September and those ultimately successful are expected to take over rail operations in Spring next year.

Brian Cox, Stagecoach Director responsible for coordinating rail bids said: "The Group has consistently said that it will only enter railway franchising if it is convinced it can provide a better service to the public and without risk to its existing bus business.

Success

"As we learn more about the opportunities, we are certain that by working with existing railway management and staff we can make a success of franchising both for rail travellers and Stagecoach."

Great Western is the company providing Inter-City 125 services from London Paddington to South Wales, taking in Bristol, the Cotswolds and the West Country. GW faces strong competition from coaches and cars on the M4. The main challenge here will be to further develop traffic.

LTS Rail is the name for the London, Tilbury & Southend line which runs from London's Fenchurch Street via Upminster or Tilbury to Southend and Shoeburyness.

The smallest franchise on offer, it is primarily a commuter line and was, until recently, known as the 'misery line' for its poor performance. That has been reversed but it still has a fleet of old rolling stock. The main challenge will be to sustain and improve reliability and punctuality.

Scope

South West Trains operates from London Waterloo to Guildford, Aldershot, Portsmouth, Basingstoke, Salisbury, Exeter, Southampton, Bournemouth and Weymouth. It is expected to offer plenty of scope for traffic development and opportunities for better bus-rail coordination as Stagecoach South's operating divisions of Hants & Surrey, Hampshire Bus and Coastline provide services in this region.

A second group of franchises was expected to be announced as *On Stage* went to press for Network South Central, Gatwick Express, Midland Main Line and East Coast Main Line services. Although scheduled for franchising in this batch, Scotrail may be deferred to a later date.

Big majority says yes to Stagecoach



CHESTERFIELD Transport was acquired by the group in late July following acceptance of the Stagecoach offer by more than 99 per cent of its staff in the first ballot.

Until 1990 the company was owned by the local authority when it was sold in the industry's first municipal company employee buyout.

Chesterfield operates bus services around the town and surrounding area as well as coach tours, excursions and private hire.

The company employs 320 people and operates 154 vehicles. It is being merged with East Midland which is now responsible for Chesterfield's management.

Express service set for great returns

RIBBLE launched its new Stagecoach Express inter-urban network service with a flourish at the end of June.

Linking Manchester to Blackpool and Southport to Lancaster, both via Preston, the network offers an attractive alternative to car users, all too often finding themselves stuck in traffic on the region's motorways, and rail travellers tired of ageing facilities and high fares.

Preston bus station is the hub of the new operation where services interconnect to allow people to transfer.

Ribble has committed ten Dennis Javelins with a further two for back up to the operation.

Celebrities

Ribble's Managing Director Michael Chambers toured with vehicles visiting the five towns and cities involved where they were met by local celebrities.

Footballing legend Tom Finney, who played for England and Preston North End, was on hand at Preston for the event when he signed a commemorative football which is now being raffled in the company – proceeds will go to the Imperial Cancer Research Fund.

At Lancaster, local MP Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman was ready with scissors and ribbon, and at the nearby university members of the Students Union and National Federation of Bus Users added their seal of approval.

Southport was the next

Plumed ice dancers joined Michael Chambers for Blackpool's launch at the Pleasure Beach.



Ribble's Michael Chambers toasts to the service's success with Coronation Street's Rita outside the Rovers Return.

venue where the town's Pleasure Land played host to the local launch.

The white knuckle rides of Blackpool Pleasure Beach provided a breathtaking backdrop at the next venue when plumed dancers from the ice show added colour to the occasion.

Toasted

Last leg of the tour saw Stagecoach Express paying a visit to Coronation Street at Granada's Manchester studios. Actress Barbara Knox, known better to millions as Rita, toasted to success with Michael outside the Rovers Return.

Since the launch, customer feedback forms have been complimenting the staff – particularly about the helpful attitude of the dedicated drivers.

A hotline booking number was introduced ten days before the first services rolled. Manned between 8am and 6pm, six days a week more than 1,000 calls a week have been received.

The X61 operates seven days a week between Blackpool to Manchester via Preston between 7am and 8.15pm using the M55 and M61 motorways.

The X51 Lancaster to Southport via Preston runs hourly six days a week between 7am and 6pm and at two hourly intervals on Sunday.

Since the service began customer feedback forms have been complimenting the staff – particularly about the helpful attitude of the dedicated drivers

Former England footballer Tom Finney, right, kicked off services from Preston.

The X61 and X64 are offshoots connecting Chorley and Bolton into the main network with existing X63 services from Blackburn also connecting into Preston.

Early results are encouraging with daily figures surpassing expectations. Niche markets are being developed to cater for anticipated demands for Christmas shopping in Manchester and the switch-on for Blackpool's illuminations.

Keenly priced coaches link coast and city



Vehicles serving the new 909 service made an impressive sight on launch day.

AN hourly express service linking Grimsby, Hull, Scunthorpe, Doncaster, Meadowhall and Sheffield was launched at the beginning of July.

Service 909 provides a keenly priced coach service between major towns, coast resorts and regional shopping at Meadowhall.

Volvo B10Ms are driven by dedicated drivers on the route which has seen passenger usage shoot up by 70 per cent in the first couple of months.

Resources have been pooled from Grimsby, Cleethorpes, East Midland and Kingston-upon-Hull Transport to provide the service.

East Midland, Grimsby and Cleethorpes'

managing director Barry Pybis said: "The service really seems to have caught the imagination of our passengers.

"We have introduced special family tickets to boost the seaside market and we're anticipating significant patronage by students when colleges resume. The service offers a persuasive alternative for the commuter as well.

"A great deal of hard work has gone into the successful launch of the service at Chesterfield, Grimsby and Hull. My thanks to Richard Kay, Phil Browne, Phil Cartwright and our team of drivers for its smooth launch and operation."

Staff warm up their Highland welcome

INVERNESS Traction staff took part in Welcome Host seminars arranged by the Scottish Tourist Board and Highlands & Islands Enterprise.

The Welcome Host programme sets out to improve the level of service and hospitality offered to visitors in a region whose economy depends heavily on tourism.

The latest group was drawn from Inverness and Tain depots, bringing the number of Inverness Traction staff who have been on the seminars to 57. They have included drivers, clerical and engineering people.

Pictured with their certificates aboard the Guide Friday open top bus are, clockwise from stairs, drivers Jim Sutherland, Derek Lynn, Jimmy Edward, Derek Sweeney and Brian Stevenson; planning manager Alisdair Goodall; Guide Friday's Fiona McLaren; Inverness Traction's Alasdair MacDonald; the tourist board's Nicola Devlin and Guide Friday's Mame Mackenzie.



Help John raise cash for renal unit

JOHN Collins, a fueller shunter at Coastline's Chichester depot is planning to raise funds for the Renal & Transplant unit of St Mary's Hospital, Portsmouth, following his successful kidney transplant there.

Last year John had had kidney failure and needed dialysis to stabilise his condition. Towards the end of 1994 he was given a transplant and he returned to work earlier this year.

If anybody would like to contribute, please either hand your donation to the depot manager's office or send it to Chichester depot for John's attention.

John will tell us in a later issue how much money he raised. The unit looks after people in renal failure in the counties of Dorset, Hampshire, West Sussex, Isle of Wight, Channel Islands and parts of Wiltshire and can be contacted by ringing Brian Gardner on 01705 866111.

Search made sure bus was squeaky clean!

STRANGE things have been left on buses but among the prizewinners must be a hamster who made a bid for freedom but missed his stop!

A Dennis Dart was taken in to the Aldershot engineering department after squeaking sounds were reported.

Leading fitter Ricky Jordan and body builder Les Smith rose to the occasion and spent three hours removing most of the vehicle's internal panels. Amid scenes reminiscent of a Marx Brothers film, Ricky and Les eventually rounded up the runaway golden hamster.

Throughout the operation the duo assumed the pet belonged to a child but a phone call to the depot soon put the record straight.

An elderly lady from Farnham had decided to take the rodent for a trip in her handbag but the little chap decided to go AWOL.

Ricky and Les brought an end to the drama when they returned their furry friend to a relieved and grateful owner.

East Kent moves to new depot in Ashford



These music festivals are hard work – really!

IT's been a long round of festivities for Midland Red staff during the past couple of months.

Not that there's been any wild partying – none we've heard about anyway! – but there has been a series of festivals in its area to which they have carried thousands of people.

Most notable has been the Phoenix Festival at Long Marston airfield when a fleet of up to 15 vehicles was ferrying people at all hours of the day and night. General manager Alex Carter drove one bus at 2am on a Sunday morning.

Already during the Summer, Midland Red has been involved in the Tribal Gathering at Otmoor, the Royal Show at the Birmingham NEC, Fairport Convention's concert near Banbury and the Town & Country festival, Stoneleigh.

Nuneaton's depot manager Matt Callow, who directed operations at the Phoenix festival, said: "Once we have been to these public events once, the organisers seem very keen to have us back again which obviously reflects the professionalism and expertise shown by our staff.

"At Phoenix we operated jointly with Swindon depot. Our thanks to the people there as we couldn't have managed without them."

EAST Kent transferred its Ashford depot to new premises across town during June.

The move to a former NBC garage on the Cobbs Wood industrial estate was completed in less than four weeks and offers great potential for future development, said

depot manager Edwin Swaris.

Purpose-built drivers facilities, an enclosed bus wash and fuelling shed, three full length pits and a body and paint shop are among the features of the new site.

New vehicles are due to be delivered to Ashford soon.

President calls on busy Kenyan show stand

THE Kenya Bus stand at a trade fair of British goods and services in Nairobi proved to be among the busiest during the three day event.

Held at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre in July, the event was organised by the British High Commission and opened by President Daniel T Arap Moi.

While touring the show with many of his cabinet ministers the President was greeted to the Kenya Bus stand by Chairman Ann Gloag. Asked when double deckers were to

be introduced into the country, Mrs Gloag was able to tell the President they are currently being built in Mombasa and invited him to launch them for Kenya Bus.

In addition to the stand, one of the new vehicles operating services 'upcountry' in Kenya was on display outside the centre.

Pictured: Mrs Gloag greets President Moi to the Kenya Bus stand. In the background are Stagecoach staff Paul Mwaura, Rachel Kioko, Esther Kiome and Margaret Maina.



Weston Favell scores with pensioners

WESTON Favell is the name given to a new local minibus service in Northampton operated by the town's eastern district of United Counties, which, accordingly, centres around Weston Favell.

The scheme resulted in part from local competition and from a change in the local authority's concessionary travel scheme for elderly people.

A new circular route proved popular, offering lower fares and improved frequencies and concessions with many pensioners preferring the more friendly atmosphere of the minibus to double deckers.

Weston Favell was created providing a bespoke circular service linking the eastern areas of Northampton with each other and Weston Favell's district centre.

Working both clock and anti-clockwise on routes 80 and 81, Weston Favell has become an established service with passengers numbers growing week by week.

Victor observes the Geordie style



MALAWI depot superintendent Victor Mauluka travelled to Tyne & Wear during June for a two week attachment with Busways at South Shields and Sunderland.

Initially attending a training course at Gosforth, Victor was able to observe Busways operations and management procedures. Victor, based at Depot Zomba in Malawi, enjoyed his visit and picked up some useful tips.

Reporting on his visit he said of South Shields: "The depot has a highly motivated workforce which may be attributed to management's open door policy.

"Team spirit is manifested in the willingness of traffic assistants, revenue inspectors and managers to operate a bus in cases of shortages."

While in the North East, Victor enjoyed renowned Geordie hospitality. He said: "Heartfelt thanks to everyone for making me feel at home and for being part of the team."

Sharp sales boost for Mansfield MegaRider

EAST Midland has introduced a weekly network ticket in Mansfield called the MegaRider which offers unlimited travel in the area.

Sold on buses every day for most of the day they were initially launched at £3 each. Sales have continued to rise sharply since their introduction.

Operations manager Joe Hehir said: "I'm delighted with the results of MegaRider so far and I'm certain we can build on that success."

Fife tries out bendi-bus to beat bad weather



A Sheffield based Mainline articulated bus was an unusual sight on routes around the Fife Scottish area when it was borrowed to test its suitability for Stagecoach Express services.

Currently, several journeys around Fife's network call for duplication at peak periods. Many of them use the Tay and Forth road bridges which are sometimes subject to high-sided vehicle restrictions in bad weather.

Using a high capacity single deck vehicle like the bendi-bus – which has 67 seats – could overcome weather restrictions.

The loaned vehicle was well received by customers and it is pictured here at St Andrews bus station.

Galley goes solo to Gatwick



BUSWAYS' coaching division Armstrong Galley has become sole operator of National Express' 230 service from Newcastle to Gatwick and Heathrow Airports.

National Express has rebranded the

service to become Airlink with coaches now sporting a new livery. Drivers have been trained by National Express on how the service should be operated and an additional vehicle has been delivered to help run the revised service.

South Coast backs council cleaner air clampdown

SOUTH Coast Buses lent its support to a local authority initiative in Sussex for cleaner air when vehicles were surveyed in Lewes.



South Coast is the largest operator of buses in the district and is committed to ensuring its vehicles meet the strict diesel emission standards.

Engineering director Richard Alexander said: "The legal limit from turbo diesels is 3.7 l/m (units of opacity).

"Our vehicles are tested every 12 weeks and we aim for less than 2.7 l/m."

South Coast's oldest bus, a 1980 Leyland National, was parked on Malling Hill, Lewes, during the day long survey by local council officers when dozens of vehicles were checked.

Happily, the bus passed its own emission test with flying colours.

School wins video for safe crossing idea

CREATIVE pupils at Highfield Hall primary school in Newbold scooped first prize in a road safety competition for young people in Bolsover, Chesterfield and north east Derbyshire.

Find a safe place to cross was the school's winning entry and their efforts won them a video recorder for their school, given by East Midland. The event was organised by Derbyshire County Council's road

safety office for the area.

Staff at head office in Chesterfield were given the difficult task of choosing the winner from all of the entries which had been pinned on the walls so that everyone could vote for their favourite.

Pictured here are the winning artists with East Midland's Managing Director Barry Pybis, second from right and Cllr Joe Murphy, Chair of Derbyshire's Highways and Transport Committee.



Stagecoach Holdings PLC Annual Report & Accounts

THIS has been an outstanding year for Stagecoach, with our core businesses continuing to display real growth and the group adding over £160 million of annualised turnover through acquisition.

I am delighted therefore to report turnover during the year up 77% to £338 million and pre-tax profits up 72% to £32.6 million. Earnings per share increased from 10.3p to 16.0p, an uplift of 55%. The Board is recommending a final dividend of 3.65p per share making a total for the year of 5.3p, an increase of 29%.

Within the core UK businesses brought to flotation in 1993, a key objective, in addition to meeting profitability targets, has been to identify and develop opportunities for increased passenger numbers and organic revenue growth. I am particularly pleased that revenues have grown by more than 6% over last year at these companies of which 4% represents volume growth.

Whilst some of this is due to the more favourable economic conditions, I strongly believe that the introduction of new vehicles, improved frequencies, and lower fares has enabled us to increase ridership and revenues. In particular, the Stagecoach Express inter-urban concept has proved very successful and since the year end has been extended to a number of new areas where initial results are encouraging.

We have also continued tight control of operating costs and in the UK on a per mile basis these are typically 20% below Department of Transport national and regional averages.

During the year we made eight acquisitions and I am delighted to report operating profits at these companies of £8.0 million before restructuring costs. Other than the two London companies, which were acquired on privatisation, and A1 Service, the acquisitions were made from management and employee owned (ESOP) companies where in all cases first ballot acceptances by employee shareholders exceeded 99%.

These acquisitions broaden the Stagecoach portfolio to encompass major urban operations for the first time. I am confident that with a significant investment in new vehicles, the strength of our group purchasing function and the introduction of Stagecoach management techniques, all of these companies are capable of achieving Stagecoach profit targets.



You will however be aware that our 20% holdings in Mainline Partnership (Sheffield) and SB Holdings (Glasgow) were referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and in both cases we have been required to divest our share holdings. We have been granted leave for judicial review of the Sheffield decision in the High Court and we are currently in discussions with the OFT regarding our interest in Strathclyde but I am confident that if divestments are required we will realise additional value for shareholders from the disposals.

A number of our smaller acquisitions have also been subject to regulatory review. We believe that there are strong public interest grounds in support of these acquisitions encompassing investment, service, quality, bringing stability to the network, innovations and lower fares. Similar contentions have also been put forward by independent industry commentators. Our record bears this out with fares at Stagecoach companies rising at less than half the industry average. One example is Lancaster, where we took over all the services in

"I strongly believe that introduction of new vehicles, improved frequencies, and lower fares have enabled us to increase ridership and revenues."

August 1993. We have been able to reduce real fares and improve service frequencies at the same time as investing substantial sums in new vehicles.

Whilst there has already been consolidation within the UK bus industry, we believe there are still opportunities to make selective acquisitions and to grow organically – we currently only have around 12% UK market share.

There are also an increasing number of overseas development opportunities and we believe that the group, with its past experience and trading record, is in a unique position to capitalise on them.

During the year we have investigated projects in Asia, Australasia, North and South America, Africa and Continental Europe and we announced in May a joint venture to acquire a privatised bus operation around Lisbon in Portugal. We have also expressed an interest in the current UK rail privatisation process and pre-qualified for the first eight franchises to be tendered in the year ahead.

Muir Russell resigned from the Board on 31 January 1995 following his promotion within the Scottish Office. I would like to thank him for his considerable commitment and contribution to the Board in the preparations for our flotation and in the first 21 months as a listed company. We welcomed Robert Speirs to the Board following his appointment as a non-executive director on 1 March 1995. Robert Speirs is Group Finance Director of The Royal Bank of Scotland and I am sure that with his wide experience, he will make a significant contribution to Board decisions.

I would also like to record the Board's appreciation to every employee for their contribution to the continued success of the group over the year.

I believe that the year ahead presents a number of exciting challenges for the group and I look forward to another twelve months of sound progress and development in both the UK and overseas.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "B. Souter".

Brian Souter
Executive Chairman

- **Turnover up 77% to £337.7 million**
- **Profits before tax of £32.6 million, an increase of 72%**
- **Earnings per share at 16.0p, a rise of 55%**
- **Eight new acquisitions contribute operating profits of £4.7 million after restructuring costs**
- **Operating cashflows of £80.3 million, an increase of 132%**
- **Final proposed dividend of 3.65p (net), making a total of 5.3p for the year (1994 – 4.1p)**

	1995 £000	1994 £000
TURNOVER	337,717	191,034
Operating profit		
– Continuing	35,045	23,175
– Acquisitions	4,744	Nil
Operating profit	39,789	23,175
Profit before taxation	32,615	18,922
Profit for the financial year	22,416	12,715
Earnings per ordinary share	16.0p	10.3p
Operating cash flow	80,283	34,583
Capital expenditure	60,458	31,415
Net borrowings	118,508	54,942
Net assets	83,467	49,355
Return on net assets	35.2%	28.5%
Debt gearing %	142%	111%
Interest cover (times)	4.9	5.4
Free cash flow per share	44.6p	19.9p

THIS information is only a summary of information contained in the company's full consolidated annual report and accounts and directors' report.

It does not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the results and

cashflow of the group. For further information, the annual report and accounts, which contain the full consolidated annual accounts, the directors' report and the auditors' report on those accounts should be consulted.

Stagecoach Express services linking Dundee with Glasgow and Edinburgh and the Fife towns have continued to experience significant growth

SCOTLAND

THE Scottish operations (Fife Scottish, Bluebird and Stagecoach Buses) have continued to demonstrate strong organic growth particularly through the ongoing development of the inter-urban Stagecoach Express concept. There was no fares increase in Fife although fares were increased at Bluebird and Stagecoach Buses to compensate for increased fuel duty.

In overall terms Fife Scottish achieved passenger growth of 1.2% over the year with revenues increasing by 9% as a result of longer average journeys increasing average yields per passenger. As outlined last year, the Stagecoach Express services linking Dundee with Glasgow and Edinburgh and the Fife towns have continued to experience significant growth with passenger numbers increasing by 22% and revenues by 27% on a year on year comparison. Fife Scottish also made significant gains in the local authority tendered services market.

Further innovation in Fife took the form of a



"January Sale" offering off-peak return trips for the price of a single throughout the network for three weeks in January and a widespread survey of pensioners into various aspects of service provision and their needs. Around 10,000 replies were received and 1,500 lucky winners were awarded with a festive lunch for them and a friend.

Bluebird has also seen real passenger growth with numbers up 1.9% on last year. Further upgrading of the Aberdeen-Inverness service took place during the year with new vehicles being introduced to improve frequencies. Passenger loadings have now increased by 300% since the introduction of the service in May 1993. Services in the Inverness/Tain area were relaunched with the introduction of new vehicles and higher frequencies. A number of these services have also experienced passenger gains.

A P-'n'-R (Park & Ride) service was introduced in Perth for Christmas 1994, supported by Tayside Regional Council. This proved successful in reducing town centre congestion and the experimental service has been continued in 1995.

NORTH WEST

THE policy of minimising fare increases has continued with a selective 2% fare increase in Cumberland in April 1995, only the second increase since 1992, designed to offset the government increase in fuel duty. At Ribble, a similar increase was also introduced. Overall revenues also reflect a full year's impact of the additional Lancaster and National Express services introduced by Ribble in August 1993 and October 1993 respectively.

Cumberland has achieved further growth in the Lake District tourist market with an extension of the summer season from April to October, a popular expansion of the frequent open-top services around Lake Windermere, two experimental Park & Ride schemes in Grasmere and Kentmere and joint ticketing with the railway and boat companies. This

Expansion, supported by membership of the Cumbria Tourist Board and extensive publicity, has increased passengers by 6% and revenue by 12% on tourist services

expansion, supported by membership of the Cumbria Tourist Board and extensive publicity, has increased passengers by 6% and revenue by 12% on tourist services. Further investment in infrastructure has continued with the completion of a new depot in Barrow-in-Furness to replace the dilapidated former municipal depot, built in 1936, the site of which was sold for a retail development. The new depot will result in lower running costs and will greatly improve staff working conditions.

Ribble has continued to operate in a highly competitive market. Despite this the company has increased market share on a number of key routes through the introduction of new vehicles, improved frequencies and reduced fares. A network review was undertaken in Lancaster during the year and further upgrading took place on the company's key route into North Manchester. In June 1995 Ribble introduced the Stagecoach Express inter-urban concept linking the main towns and cities in the North West. Initial passenger response has been positive.

Ribble has continued to develop partnerships with local authorities to promote bus travel with a feature in the current year being the extension of an existing bus lane in Lancaster and the introduction of a preferential bus gate to reduce congestion and improve running times.

The Stagecoach Manchester services between Piccadilly and Stockport, introduced in January 1994, have continued to develop during the year, with annualised revenue now over £1 million.



SOUTH

SOUTH comprises Hampshire Bus, Hants & Surrey, Sussex Coastline, South Coast and East Kent. The year saw the completion of the integration of East Kent acquired in 1993, development of new services to spur organic growth, and redevelopment of its facilities at Aldershot, planned to be the first in a programme to update depot facilities across the whole of the operations.

East Kent's reputation for quality, its willingness to work in close partnership with local authorities, and its ability to offer value for money enabled it to win the operating contract for Canterbury's second Park & Ride scheme. This prestigious scheme, which is a UK leader in Park & Ride, provided the opportunity to introduce state of the art low-floor vehicles fitted with both kneeling facilities and ramps to give disabled, elderly and those with pushchairs easier access both to the service itself and to the facilities of Canterbury.

A similar project in Winchester, another important Cathedral city with traffic problems, was also awarded during the year. The scheme is increasingly successful with the car park over 75% full.

The Group will continue to work in partnership with local authorities to promote Park & Ride schemes, which can make a major contribution to improving the environment of our historic urban centres.

Elsewhere in Stagecoach South, Coastline further developed its flagship Portsmouth-Brighton service, which benefited from pricing initiatives and 1994's RMT strike. Year on year revenue increased by 12% and it was particularly satisfactory that the high quality service provided enabled some of the extra traffic gained during the strike to be retained.

At United Counties a key feature has been the development by the company of additional contracts work



A new hourly X27 Stagecoach Express service was introduced just after the year end from Brighton to Bournemouth. This service, utilising high quality inter-urban vehicles, will build on and complement the growth already achieved on the longer distance service. Early results from this service are very encouraging.

MIDLANDS

FARES have been held constant at all three Midlands companies during the year, with improved revenues directly as a result of additional services.

At United Counties a key feature has been the development by the company of additional contracts work. Weetabix, based at Burton Latimer, have contracted all their staff transport requirements to United Counties. The company also provides campus and town centre links for Nene College in Northampton. Innovative rescheduling has enabled the majority of these additional services to be undertaken at minimal extra cost.

The introduction of new Volvo Midibuses into Bedford town centre has continued to prove successful with increased passenger numbers up 4% on a year on year basis.

At East Midland, the continued focus has been on improving the quality and efficiency of services operated. Within Mansfield, a further eight new vehicles were introduced to complement existing services and offer improved frequencies.

In co-operation with Derbyshire County Council, the company has also improved services along the Staveley corridor, with enhanced passenger information and the provision of new bus shelters.

This was the first full year's trading of Grimsby Cleethorpes as part of the group. Profitability was substantially increased as a result of the transfer of the administration function to Chesterfield together with reduced operating costs arising from the benefits of group purchasing and revised pay arrangements. On 1 September 1994 a new service between Grimsby and Doncaster was launched adopting the Stagecoach inter-urban concept and since the year end this has been extended to Sheffield.

WEST

1994/95 was the first full year for the West based companies under Stagecoach ownership. The year saw further consolidation of the three constituent divisions of the company (Cheltenham & Gloucester, Midland Red South and Red & White) in organisation, operation and performance.

The intake of over 100 new vehicles has had a significant effect in enabling old, expensive, time expired vehicles to be sold or scrapped and on improving the quality, efficiency and reliability of operations. In addition, it has led to the identification of new commercial opportunities and the introduction of new and enhanced services.

Within Red & White in Wales, the inter-urban express service concept has been introduced on the Cardiff-Abergavenny service with frequency improved to half-hourly. From January 1995 similar changes have been made to the services between Merthyr, Tredegar, Ebbw Vale and Brynmawr. Since the introduction of these new services there has been an increase in passenger numbers of approximately 20%.

The introduction of new Mercedes 25-seat vehicles at all three divisions has been very successful in attracting increased numbers of passengers, notably in Cwmbran, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Nuneaton and Coventry with up to 15% growth being achieved on existing frequencies.

As part of a Department of Transport sponsored initiative, Midland Red and Warwickshire County Council, in a joint venture, have converted two Leyland National vehicles to run on liquid petroleum gas on services operated from Nuneaton garage. The performance of these vehicles is currently being monitored by the Transport Road Research Laboratory to determine if this represents a feasible alternative.



PACIFIC RIM

THE New Zealand operations have enjoyed a second consecutive year of strong revenue and passenger growth, revenue increasing by 6.8% over 1994 levels in local currency terms. This increase is attributed to a great effort by staff, the introduction of new buses, the continuation of a five year fares freeze, the introduction of additional services and a buoyant local economy.

A number of successful innovations involving higher frequency services were introduced during the year.

Cityline Hutt Valley introduced a 15 minute frequency mini-bus service between Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt, which resulted in a 119% increase in revenue. Further upgrading of Stagecoach Wellington's Campus Connection service, which links the city's main tertiary education establishments, resulted in an 85% increase in revenue.

The group's small Hong Kong presence continues to develop with the introduction of a further six double deck vehicles in May 1995.



AFRICA

THE African companies have experienced mixed fortunes with a rapidly improving economic climate in Kenya offset by further economic uncertainty and devaluation in Malawi.

In Kenya, business continues to experience annual passenger growth of over 8% and as a result the operations continue to expand. Over 68 new vehicles were introduced during the year to replace life expired vehicles and meet the demand for organic growth. Significant opportunities exist for continued development of both the Nairobi and Mombasa operations in addition to other parts of the country.

The major factor influencing the performance of Malawi has been the substantial devaluation of the Malawi currency by over 140% resulting in substantial increases in interest rates and inflation and a consequential impact on fares and costs. Steps were taken to maintain the profitability of the business with those services incurring losses either being withdrawn or reduced. As a result of this Stagecoach Malawi is in a strong position to benefit from the upturn which is already being experienced in the early part of the new financial year.



NATIONAL TRANSPORT TOKENS

A slightly disappointing year has ended with trading affected by the focus of the company's customers on the local government review in England & Wales. Now that this is substantially complete, new sales opportunities present themselves and these will be vigorously pursued during the current year.

New vehicles have already been introduced into the fleet enabling the retirement of life expired vehicles and a network review to take place in Kilmarnock

WESTERN SCOTTISH & A1 SERVICE

WESTERN Scottish was acquired on 18 July 1994 and A1 Service on 29 January 1995.

There has been significant restructuring at Western since it was acquired including the closure of the central workshop in December 1994, a reorganisation of the clerical supervisory and administrative functions at both depots and head office and the complete renegotiation of all wage agreements. This included a simplification of pay agreements and terms and conditions which were bought out by lump sum payments.

Over 70 new vehicles have already been introduced into the fleet enabling the retirement of life expired vehicles and a network review to take place in Kilmarnock. Initial results are encouraging although it is recognised that the company still has some way to go to meet Stagecoach profit targets.

In addition to the acquisition of A1 Service, Western Scottish also acquired Arran Transport & Trading in October 1994 which consolidates Western's presence in Arran, Bute and the Cowal peninsula.

BUSWAYS

BUSWAYS was acquired on 26 July 1994. The company was previously owned by its management and employees and in excess of 99% of employees voted in favour of the offer. The company operates in Newcastle, Sunderland and South Shields.

As a result of the demise of the coal and cutbacks in the shipbuilding industries in the area and the continuing effects of the economic recession which have been particularly severe in Sunderland and South Shields, the company introduced innovative ticketing initiatives to stimulate ridership. In both the Sunderland and South Shields areas these have been successful in generating additional passenger usage and revenue.

In November 1994, the company established Stagecoach Darlington when the majority of employees of Darlington Transport, who were disillusioned with the privatisation process, approached Busways and indicated their desire to work for the group. Management responsibility was transferred to Cleveland Transit from May 1995.

Acquisitions in the year



LONDON

EAST London and Selkent were purchased on 6 September 1994 following their privatisation by London Transport. Both have undergone significant restructuring.

Unlike the rest of the UK, the London bus market is still regulated. Selkent and East London each operate a portfolio of contracts awarded by London Transport Buses (LTB) which is the regulatory authority in London.

LTB offers each bus route for competitive tender on a five year rolling programme and sets the level of service and fares. LTB also monitors the quality of service and operators can be penalised for failing to deliver the prescribed level of service to passengers.

At East London, the operations department has been restructured with three layers of clerical/management staff compressed into



one. Similar economies have also been made within the engineering function as well as substantial reductions in the purchase of engineering materials and support services.

Within Selkent major initiatives have been put in place to improve the quality of the service enjoyed by the company's passengers. This has included investment in a new bus cleaning facility at Plumstead depot to ensure that 150 buses are thoroughly cleaned internally and externally on a daily basis and a total review of engineering standards. This also involved a doubling of the frequency of vehicle examinations. These are major improvements on the previous standard and have attracted favourable comment from passengers.

The finance and purchasing function was transferred to East London shortly after acquisition. There were also significant redundancies among administration staff as a number of positions were no longer relevant. These actions have brought significant reductions in the cost base of the company.

CLEVELAND, HULL & HARTLEPOOL

CLEVELAND Transit and Hull City Transport were acquired on 14 November 1994 and Hartlepool Transport on 12 December 1994. In both cases over 99% of staff voted to accept the Stagecoach offer in the first instance.

At Cleveland the main feature of the year has been the completion of the first bus priority 'Green Route' outside London. Local and national government funding of over £1 million has produced a series of measures in Middlesbrough from the centre along a major radial corridor which will enable existing services to operate more reliably leading to the development of improved routes.

From April 1995, Hull is believed to be among the first UK operators to use a magnetic card ticketing system. The new system is already proving popular with passengers with the ultimate objective to maximise the use of magnetic cards thus reducing cash transactions and improving route efficiency.

The administrative and financial functions at Hartlepool are in the process of being transferred to the Cleveland head office in Stockton-on-Tees. An initial 10 new buses have already been introduced, representing the first investment in new vehicles in Hartlepool in over 10 years.

Investment at Plumstead depot enables 150 buses to be thoroughly cleaned internally and externally on a daily basis

Hundreds earn awards in Malawi

MORE than 400 drivers of Stagecoach Malawi received safe driving awards and another 30 were given long service awards by the subsidiary's Chairman Mrs Gloag during her visit to the country earlier this year.

Separate ceremonies were held in the country's three regions which saw Ann cover nearly 700 miles in less than three days.

Seven people were presented with 30 year service awards, namely Ferris Kapoloma and Jeoffrey Bailoni, foremen at Chichiri; Verson Lumwira, foreman at Balaka; John Walusa, electrical foreman at Makata Road; Livingstone Kajiwa, depot supervisor; Friday Bazilio, telephone operator and Keston Mbwana, a vehicle mechanic, all from Lilongwe.

Safe driving certificates were awarded to 412 people with records ranging between one and 23 years.

Managing Director John Gould paid tribute to the recipients pointing out that during the past 12 months the company had carried 53 million passengers over 19 million miles, thus providing an accident rate of one every 31,250 miles travelled!

Special mention was made of Lilongwe based Jackson Jere for his 23 year record with Henry Njobvuyalema from Chichiri, and Isaac Kadatseka of Lilongwe for their 21 year awards.



Safe driving and long service award recipients show off their certificates at Lilongwe.

.. And nine in Grimsby mark service too



GRIMSBY Cleethorpes Transport held its first long service dinner as part of the Stagecoach Group at Briggate in May.

Finance director Alan Fuller presented awards to Mark Winterton, William Chapman, Stanley Harniess, George Harniess, Gordon

Dickinson, Richard Bagshaw, David Rattray, Brian Sutcliffe and Paul Abbott who have service ranging between 25 and 30 years each.

The evening was a great success and the recipients are pictured with partners and other guests.

Ticket launch sees Blakey return

BLAKEY – the inspector who put the fear of God into crews of TV's *On the Buses* during the 1970s – emerged from retirement to help Selkent and East London launch sponsored ticket rolls.

Actor Stephen Lewis joined Image Promotions, sponsors KFC fast food chain and Stagecoach at Greenwich Park for the fun.

Promotional ticket rolls are found in several other parts of the country but this was their first use in London.

Selkent's operations director Mark Threapleton said he was pleased that London Transport, which regulates services in the capital, had recognised the value and cost savings of sponsored tickets.

Meanwhile Stephen Lewis can be seen in BBC's latest comedy *Oh! Dr Beeching*, set on a rural railway station in the early 1960s. Could this be about Blakey's early life before he stepped on the buses?



THOUSANDS of golf fans who converged on St Andrews for the Open found their first drive of the day was on board a fleet of 20 Fife Scottish double deckers ready to take them to the Old Course.

Many people travelled to the area by train to nearby Leuchars where the buses provided the Golfink service to the event itself.

During the championship the vehicles carried 12,000 people to and from the course. At times convoys of buses were given police escorts to get them along the five mile

route in good time – much to the chagrin of stranded motorists!

Golfink was a joint venture between Fife Scottish, Fife Regional Council, Scotrail and Fife Constabulary.

Finally genuine thanks to all the drivers and supervisors involved who helped to make the Golfink such a success.

Students' funbus tour raised thousands

MORE than £8,000 was raised from an annual funbus tour arranged by students of London's Charing Cross Medical School with help from Stagecoach South.

The company loaned open top 424 DCD, the double decker which featured in 'On the Buses' during the 1970s, while Basingstoke driver Kevin Parsons took a week's leave to be able to take the vehicle around the various destinations in southern England.

The tour, held to raise cash for the Cancer Research Campaign, visited London's Leicester Square, Windsor, Woking, Guildford, Brighton, Southampton, Bournemouth and Reading.

The funbus tour has become a 14 year long tradition. It's doubtful though that previous tours had been so plagued by bad weather!

People pitch in to help Round Britain Bus-a-thon

RECENTLY returned from a 10 day Round Britain Bus-a-thon in a 33 year old Routemaster is a group of people from East London's Romford garage.

Taking a coastal route around the British mainland the 10 people made 22 street collections to raise money for children with leukaemia.

Margate, on the Kent coast, was the first stop and Southend, in Essex, the last and included visits to Lands End and John O'Groats on the way.

The group set themselves a target of covering 350 miles a day but the journey was not without incident.

Three major breakdowns involved the alternator – and sadly, meant missing some collection points to stay on schedule – the cooling fan shearing through the radiator at

the entrance of Liverpool's Mersey Tunnel – a common problem on Routemasters covering long journeys on original AEC engines – and stopping again to avert the same problem in Edinburgh. This time the fan blades were trimmed to reduce vibration.

On the lighter side, travelling across Bodmin Moor in the middle of the night with dimmed interior lights resulted in reports of UFOs on local radio the following morning!

Two team members were briefly left behind at different places. In Porthcawl one jumped off to collect money from cars while the bus stopped at traffic lights. He had to run a quarter of a mile to catch up again, much to everyone else's amusement.

In the early hours of a misty morning in North Berwick, someone else hopped off in search of toilets but all he could see was the vehicle vanishing into the murkiness. Fortunately he saw the funny side of things later on!

The group was warmly welcomed wherever it went and, in quiet country villages, the sight of a red London bus proved memorable for many locals.

One of the group, Ron Warren, told *On Stage*: "We would like to thank everyone who welcomed us – especially when turning up unannounced, and all the group companies who supplied us with fuel.

Oil leak

"Special thanks to the depot manager and engineer at Inverness who stayed with us until after midnight to help rectify an oil leak. At South Wales Transport, TGWU members laid on a meal for us and held collections on their buses too."

TGWU branches around the country made donations to the event and regions helped with organisation.

So far, the event has collected £5,000 for the charity but the group are keen to raise much more. If you can help, please send donations to Ron Warren, RBBAT, 33 Morris Avenue, Billericay, Essex CM11 2JZ. Cheques can be made payable to the Foundation for Children with Leukaemia (Bus-a-thon 95).

Pictured above is the 10 strong team who were given a send-off by actor Stephen Lewis, better known as Blakey, the inspector of TV's *On the Buses*.

Children's mural cheers Lewes waiting room

A colourful mural painted by a local school now brightens up the waiting room at Lewes in Sussex.

Pupils of Hamsey primary school at Cooksbridge set to work with their brushes in exchange for transport to and from their summer camp.

Entitled Lewes Routes, the mural was officially unveiled by Debra Topliff, Managing Director of Stagecoach South, who also presented gifts to the children involved. The youngsters were assisted by local artist Brian Costall.



Peterhead's raft cut a dash in race



CPT's new chairman

FIFE Scottish managing director Jim Moffat took over chairmanship of the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (Scotland) at its annual conference earlier this year. He was presented with the chain of office by outgoing chairman John Galloway.

THIS isn't the launch of a waterbus service for the Scottish lochs but a rather splendid raft built by staff at Bluebird's Peterhead depot for the Ythan raft race.

Looking resplendent in Stagecoach colours – complete with matching oars – the

raft is pictured here with Shaheen Summers at the helm who was prime mover behind its construction.

Although the raft didn't sail home the winner, it did pick up a well deserved prize for being the most sophisticated vessel of the day.

High hopes for Winchester story

A detailed history of Winchester bus station has been prepared by Hampshire driver Roger Marshall.

The history grew out an idea to research the background of American company Seattle Metro during a planned visit to the states. In exchange Roger offered a profile of the Winchester base.

The offer accepted, the scheme grew beyond that originally intended with Roger passing much of his free time searching through the county records office for information about the site.

Roger's profile of Winchester depot not only covers the historical aspects of the site with much detail about the early days of public transport but includes a more general outline of life in the city.

He has had a number of copies of his profile published privately and is hoping to extend availability through mainstream publishers.

Meanwhile Seattle beckons and Roger is preparing for his voyage there soon.

Alan makes arresting performance

IN a uniform more suited to Strangeways than Stagecoach Chesterfield driver Alan Wall is asked to help police with their enquiries.

He was released shortly after as Alan and the officers were taking part in a jail and bail event organised by the Royal National Institute for the Blind to raise money.

Local business people were arrested

A dazzling advert – that'll be the Dayglo!



A United Counties Volvo Olympian is dazzling all who gaze upon it since it has been painted as an overall advertisement. Dayglo red has been used as the base

colour for Airflow Garage's new Washworld advert which can be seen on a cross-town Northampton route which passes the Washworld site.

John caught between rock and a hard place

JOHN Macleod, of Inverness Traction's Tain depot, had a lucky escape as he took a summer service to Durness.

Near the village of Scourie the road was suddenly blocked by falling rocks after some over enthusiastic blasting by a highways team, trapping his bus.

Despite hard work by a local JCB driver, John had to wait several hours before a way out was cleared for him.

Tain's depot controller Bill Dunbar has been saying this was the best excuse for over running he has heard for long time!

and whisked away in Alan's bus to do some hard labour – sitting about at a local hotel, in reality. Only when enough cash was raised were people allowed to leave.

The event was a great success, collecting more than £3,000 for the RNIB – and, happily, nobody was left at the hotel waiting for higher bids either!



Perth takes bowling honours

BLUEBIRD's annual bowling tournament was held at the Moray club in Elgin during June when nine teams took part.

Perth won the day, receiving the Walter Alexander trophy and a set of whisky glasses each. Team members were Bob Nicoll, Wall Robertson, Ann Burnett and Steve Brodie. The runners up were Elgin, formed by Ronnie Eddie, Jim McMullen, Joe Murray and Bob Wildgoose, who were presented with the James Tweedie trophy.



Busways Norman Fullard with fellow driver trainers in Malawi.

Steering a course through driver training

BUSWAYS driver trainer Norman Fullard has been on secondment to Malawi since the beginning of the year.

In that time he has been working on improving driver training standards there. Working closely

with a team of instructors, he has been coordinating and reorganising instruction and customer care courses.

While thoroughly enjoying himself, he assures us that life is no picnic either but certainly a far cry from life in Geordieland!

Scottish service improvements

INVERNESS Traction's popular service from home town to Durness in the far north west of Sutherland has been improved with the introduction of interurban vehicles on the four and half mile route. The Pluscarden Abbey to Elgin service runs two days a week.

Bluebird has successfully bid for tenders from Grampian Regional Council to operate the

Heatherhopper services linking popular tourist attractions and remote scenic areas.

Services operated run from Tomintoul, to destinations at Ballater, Spey Bay and Huntly along with Elgin to Aviemore and Perth to Banchory. Complementing these, Bluebird is also running services across Glemshee from Aberdeen to Aberfeldy or Blair Castle.



Stuart Crewdson, right, accepts his award from Michael Chambers.

Second time win for apprentice

STUART Crewdson, apprentice body builder at Ribble's Morecambe depot, has won the company's Apprentice of the Year award at Blackburn College for the second time.

In recognition of Stuart's success Ribble managing director Michael Chambers presented him with a voucher to buy £150 worth of tools.

Death of former East Kent driver

WE regret to report the death of former East Kent driver Bert Gary of Canterbury. He was among the company's first one man operators in the 1970s. Our condolences to his son David, himself a Canterbury driver, and his family.

Bluebird helps brigade have fun

BLUEBIRD helped the 3rd Aberdeen Company of the Boys Brigade celebrate its centenary in June by sponsoring its celebrations which included a dinner dance and a church parade. Highlight of the weekend was a display at Aberdeen's exhibition centre to which Bluebird vehicles conveyed group members and families.

Terry takes top honours as golf events come around

THE Busways Challenge tournament was won by a jubilant Terry Irving. Terry, paintshop supervisor at Byker in Newcastle, beat off the strong competition to lift the splendid Westfield Cup – a superb piece of silver modelled on the Open trophy.

AT the first sign of sunshine, what better relaxation can there be but to take off to the nearest golf course for an enjoyable round. That's exactly what dozens of Stagecoach people have been doing in recent weeks so now we bring you a round up of events.



A smiling Terry Irving shows off the Busways golf trophy.

Winners of the event's team award were Stephen Hailes, of Manors, Dave Todd, from South Shields and Andy Hill of Slatyford.

East Midland held its annual tournament at the prestigious Sherwood Forest club near Mansfield. Dick Sargent and Tony Myers were hoping to make it three wins in a row but were pipped to the post by a single point from Wayne Renshaw and Andy Johnson who came in winners after some intense play.

Runners up were Tim Hotchkins and Phil Irvine and third were Joe Stenhouse and M Murrison.

The day's longest drive prize was won by Chris Megan while Joe Stenhouse, Mick Dews and Frank Howard shared honours for nearest the pin prize.

Lightning

Thanks to all involved including tournament director Pete Kemp, results coordinator Kent St Anger and Lesley Grozier and Joy Kemp who dispensed gratefully received refreshments.

Even better, more than £300 was raised for local children's charities and the Imperial Cancer Research Fund.

In Scotland, the Stagecoach companies held an inaugural event over 36 holes at Kinross golf club. A fine morning turned into a wet afternoon with a wary eye kept on the bolts of lightning which came quite close at one point!

Bluebird's A team was the winner of the handicap trophy thanks to John Pettigrew who also took the individual handicap prize. The other members of the winning team were D Sangster, Jim Cummings and J Murray.

Fife's A team was runner up in the handicap and Brian Scott from Fife won the individual scratch prize as well as running up in the individual event. J Miller of Western's B team came second in the individual scratch competition.

Hospital

Bluebird's own golf tournament at Duff House Royal course in Banff saw more success for Jim Cummings, who, with John Pettigrew and Robert West, won the team event while John also won the Leyland Tiger trophy for individual success.

Blantyre Sports Club, Malawi, was the venue for a charity golf event in aid of the Friends of the local Queen Elizabeth Hospital when operations engineer Alan Henderson holed in one at the 138 metre fifth hole – using an eight iron.

The second time he has achieved the golfer's dream, his joy was short-lived when he realised that more than 100 fellow players expected to be bought a drink in keeping with the tradition of the achievement!

Eyeing birds was all in a day's work for Steve and friends

EYEING the birds from dawn to dusk was the pleasant task in store for Selkent's Steve Davies from Bromley.

Steve, a member of the Kent Ornithological Society team, spent 24 hours trying to see or hear as many different birds as possible as part of the Great Kent Bird Race.

The quest started, appropriately at first sparrow warble – 04.33 hours to be precise – at Trottiscliffe Park on the North Downs. The team's list of ticks grew quickly as new species joined the dawn chorus.

Gravel pits at Leybourne and New Hythe, both near Maidstone, were the next port of call where the aim was to spot the Cetti's Warbler. After an agonising 55 minutes wait, one was finally spotted. Steve and the team

were then hotfoot to the Isle of Sheppey where the Marsh Harrier and the Avocet awaited their delight.

In the afternoon, Stodmarsh near Canterbury was visited followed by Pegwell Bay near Ramsgate, as well as Dover and Folkestone. By 17.50 the tally stood at 107 species.

Still with plenty of daylight left, the team headed for Dungeness but only found one more new bird. With dusk approaching Hamstreet Wood near Ashford was the final stop where Steve was able to add Woodcock and Tawny Owl to the score which finished at a record 114.

Steve would like to thank all his colleagues for their kind sponsorship of the team.

Fleetwood had a wheely good time



STAFF from Ribble's depot in Fleetwood took to two wheels to raise money for local charity, the Tony Kelsall appeal. The group cycled 20 miles between Fleetwood and St Annes where a bus was waiting to pick them up.

Competition spot



TRY your luck with our impressive wordgrid which has especially compiled to pit your wits!

Hidden in the grid are the names of 15 Stagecoach Group companies. Some have been written forwards, backwards or, indeed, any which way. To help you we have printed below the words you must find to win.

A £25 prize awaits the sender of the first correct entry opened by Editor Janet Campbell.

Send completed grids to her at the editorial address on page two by 31 October.

The names hidden in the grid are: Stagecoach Holdings; Bluebird; Cumberland; South Ribble; Busways; Fife Scottish; United Counties; Malawi; International; East Midland; Pegasus Express; Selkent; Kenya and, finally, Red and White.

The solution to the competition in the June issue appears opposite.

NAME _____

WORK ADDRESS _____

48 year Ken leads farewell fanfares



Michael Chambers, left, presents gifts to Jean and Ken Cook.

ALL good wishes to the following people who have retired in the last few months.

Among them are Ribble's Lancaster depot clerk Ken Cook who has finished work after 48 years.

He joined straight from school at 16 and, apart from national service, he worked as clerk and chief clerk at Lancaster and Morecambe.

At a surprise farewell party Ken was overwhelmed to meet many of his past colleagues. He was presented with a set of luggage and a bottle of whisky.

Ken and his wife Joan also attended a dinner given by the company when he was presented with crystal ware by managing director Michael Chambers.

Elgin driver Willie Robertson has retired after 35 years. During a celebration he was presented with a set of whisky glasses and a framed picture by colleagues and management.

Fraserburgh colleague Alex Smith retired in June after 14 years when he was presented with a gold watch by colleagues. His wife was

Fraserburgh colleagues celebrate with Alex Smith and his wife.

also given a basket of flowers. They are pictured below with, from left, Jackie Noble, Billy Clark, Sandy Gill, Ivor Adams, Brian Wallace, Bob McLeman, Forbes Bell and Jimmy Wallace.

Mary Jordan, detailer at Canterbury for East Kent, has retired after many years service. She was presented with an array of gifts by friends and colleagues. Mary had served as a conductress in the Ashford area and later went on to become one of the company's first women drivers at Canterbury in the 1970s.

Other retirements at East Kent have seen farewells to drivers Les Filmer of Herne Bay and Tony Warren of Canterbury and Sheila Fraser, Canterbury travel office clerk.

Four people from Fife Scottish have retired recently. They are William New and Dixon Crowe, both of Cowdenbeath and each with 22 years service, Sandy Thomson of Kirkcaldy after 19 years and William Buchan of Aberhill with 17 years service.



Window on Stagecoach . . . Window on

Sir,

As one of the many satisfied customers who enjoyed the excellent, tour to Ullapool recently, I must thank you for this well thought out trip.

In the first place, the driver Derek, was just the man for the job. He was very patient and good humoured with the passengers. He kept us informed of the paces we travelled through and he had a fund of stories to entertain us.

The Caledonian Hotel was well chosen for its prompt an efficient service and comfort. The stops at Fochabers and Inverness on the outward journey and Drumadroit and Fochabers on the homeward voyage were very good. We were allowed plenty of time in each place – unlike some trips where you can't enjoy the break for thinking about not being back late for the bus!

The vehicle itself was very good – we were cosy inside and appreciated the air-conditioning.

Anna Smith,
Peterhead.

The driver in question was Derek Ross of Aberdeen. Two further letters complimenting Derek on this tour were also received.

Sir,

My sister and I had cause to travel on a Bluebird coach between Fochabers and Aberdeen in the care of your driver Kenny Owens. The kindness and consideration he showed to his passengers, including a disabled person, deserves special mention.

I had never previously travelled to Aberdeen by coach but if this is the standard of service, I shall certainly use your coaches again.

Mrs Mal Battersby,
Garmouth, Morayshire.
Driver was Kenny Owens of Elgin.

Sir,

I rode on your Bluebird coach service from Inverness to Aberdeen and write to thank you for this excellent and comfortable service.

I rode on the 9.15am service and would like to pass on thanks to your driver. He was certainly a good ambassador for the company. Not only was he patient, kind and considerate to passengers, he also displayed these qualities to other road users.

He handled the bus with great care and at the end of the journey he gave me help with finding the right city route.

I was truly impressed with the service.

Richard Horlock, Mistley, Essex.
Driver Kenny Riddell, Elgin.

Sir,

I would like to thank you very much for finding my handbag which I lost in Stroud.

According to police, a lady found it outside the Subscription Rooms and handed it to you to pass on to lost property.

I am very grateful and to the lady in question. It has restored my faith in human nature.

Thank you once again.

Mrs B Smith, Nailsworth, Gloucestershire.
This letter was written to Stroud's Cheltenham & Gloucester driver Stuart Waters.

Sir,

I have been using buses for the past 25 years and have seen some good changes, especially during the past few years when I needed to take the bus to Nottingham and back.

I want to put on record that the drivers of the number 33 service are, without exception, the most friendly, helpful, courteous bunch of men you could hope to meet.

I shall soon be retiring from my work in Nottingham but, of course, I shall be still hopping on the bus to go to Nottingham from time to time – but probably not at 7.45am.

Please convey my thanks to the two kind men who made sure I was on the last bus home one night when I had to pick it up at Clavendon College.

Well done lads, keep up the good work and keep smiling. You are a pleasure to travel with.

Sybil Carlish,
Farnsfield, Notts.

Sir,

I am desperately looking for a transport book called 'Bus and Coach Operation' written by RW Falks which I have been unable to find in Malawi.

However I do hope this book is available in its latest edition in the UK. Therefore I would like to request *On Stage* readers to contact me at the address below.

If the book is available I would be grateful to know the price and address to which money should be sent. A pro-forma invoice would greatly appreciated as that would speed up the process.

Duncan Siliva, Regional superintendent,
Stagecoach Malawi, PO Box 7,
Mzuzu, Malawi, Central Africa.

Sir,

Just a quick letter to let you know how grateful I am to one of your drivers, Caroline.

As I was waiting for the bus in Arundel Drive, my son started to choke on a sweet he was eating. I started to panic and then the bus rolled up. Rather than just drive on Caroline jumped out and helped. She turned my son upside down and pressed on his stomach which made him bring up the sweet. Caroline gave me some wipes to clean him up – she was most helpful.

Caroline was a great help and definitely deserves a big thank you.

Letter sent by passenger to United Counties.

Sir,

On behalf of the council and its beneficiaries, I wish to extend our sincerest gratitude to you for the kind support you extended towards this year's Kenya Freedom From Hunger Walk in May.

Your support by way of free transport – two buses – contributed to the tremendous success of the walk and greatly boosted the image of the Council.

We also thank you for your continued support to the Council's activities and hope for continued collaboration.

James Aremo,
General Secretary, Kenya Freedom From
Hunger, Nairobi.

Sir,

On behalf of the children, parents and staff of Tulloch nursery class, I would like to thank Stagecoach for its great generosity donating a bus for our trip to Craigtown Park. The outing was a wonderful success and everyone voted it the best ever.

The children with special needs had a particularly happy time. They enjoyed the little train and bouncy castle. We were even able to take them on the boating pool, they were in such good form!

Thanks again for making this happy experience possible.

Sandra Waite, nursery teacher.
Driver was Alan Findley, Perth.

An item in the *Kettering Evening Telegraph* recorded the quick thinking of driver John Letch who came to the aid of a pensioner taken ill on his bus.

"John Letch was driving his 5A shuttle along Occupation Road, Corby, when Margaret Jones, 89, collapsed.

"Mr Ketch drove straight to the nearby ambulance station in Forest Gate Road, but both crews were out on calls. He ran to the neighbouring fire station for help. Firefighters grabbed a tank of oxygen and administered first aid on the bus while colleagues phoned for an ambulance from Kettering.

"Mrs Jones was treated at Kettering General Hospital and was later allowed home.

"She said: 'The driver was a marvel. You don't know how good people are until something like this happens. He even called to check I was all right last night.'"

Sir,

This is just a short note to let you know how successful our outing for disabled people has been. Special thanks to Richard Noonan, who really did us proud. He chose an excellent route and was generally most helpful.

All this was greatly appreciated by me, the committee and, especially, by our disabled friends.

Once again my thanks.

Mrs A Baldwin, Chairman, Gloucestershire
Association for Disability, Stroud.

Competition result

6	1	8		7		7	7	3
7		4	2	2	7	3		0
1	6		9	0	0		1	5
	6	1		0		6	1	
4	6	9	7		3	4	9	3
	2	7		1		5	0	
7	5		1	7	4		5	4
5		3	0	2	7	6		7
5	1	2		8		1	4	1

CONGRATULATIONS to A Williams of United Counties whose entry to the June competition was the first correct out of the hat! £25 is on its way.

INVESTMENT of over £5 million has been made in 52 new vehicles for Stagecoach Selkent's 53 service, one of London's busiest and frequent bus routes, linking the Woolwich and Blackheath areas with the West End.

